पर्यावरण और वन मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री राजेश पायलट): (क) और (ख) जी, हां।

(ग) हिमाचल प्रदेश सरकार के मुख्य वन्य जीव वार्डन ने रिपोर्ट दी है कि निर्णयों पर निम्न लिखित कार्रवाई की गई है:—

1. शक्ति और मारोद गांवों को अन्यत्र न बसाने के बारे में आवश्यक निर्देश दिये गए हैं।
2. पार्क में रोजगार के लिए स्थानीय लोगों को प्राथमिकता दी जा रही है और भविष्य में भी उनको प्राथमिकता दी जाएगी।
3. विश्व बैंक की सहायता प्राप्त परियोजना के तहत राज्य परियोजना कार्यान्वयन समिति ने वन सुरक्षा के लिए ठेके पर स्थानीय शिक्षित बेरोजगार युवकों को लगाने का समर्थन किया है। तदनुसार प्रस्ताव राज्य सरकार को भेजा गया है।
4. शक्ति और मझान गांवों के मन्दिरों की मरम्मत का कार्य शुरू कर दिया गया है।

Decline in Rhinos Population

1631. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a growing decline in the Rhinos population;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken to protect the Rhinos from untimely death; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) The Rhino population in 1989 was 1591 while the latest estimate of 1995 shows a population of 1566, indicating a slight decline.

(b) The main reason for decline of Rhino population during the period was a higher incidence of poaching in the year 1992 and 1993 which has since been contained largely during the last two years.

(c) and (d) The steps taken by the Government for protection and conservatin of Rhinos are given below:

(i) Rhino is placed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thus getting the highest level of protection against hunting and commercial exploitation.

(ii) India is a party to the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and abides by the regualtions of International trade in endangered species of animals and articles. Under the provisions of the convention, rhino is under Appendix-I of CITES which bans international trade in the species, products and derivatives.

(iii) Cooperation of Police, BSF, DRI, Customs, Army and other enforcement agencies is also taken, as and when required, in apprehending the poachers and illegal traders.

(iv) With a view to providing alternative home for Rhinos and also rehabilitating them in their erstwhile habitat programme for 'Rehabilitation of Rhinos' has been started in Dudhwa National Park and Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh.

(v) A network of 5 wildlife sanctuaries and 4 national parks has been set up for conservation of the species and its habitat. Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government for development of these national parks and sanctuaries, on request from the State Governments.

(vi) There is a scheme for payment of rewards to the informers, which among other things, helps in getting intelligence regarding smuggling of wildlife products.